THE

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF EDMUND GUY McMARTIN 1860-1921

VENTURA COUNTY MUSEUM OF HISTORY & ART Board of Directors

MARY LEAVENS SCHWABAUER	Presidentlst Vice President	
JOHN MC CONICA II	2nd Vice President & Legal Counsel	
DARYL REYNOLDS	Secretary	
PAUL CHINN	Treasurer	
DORCAS H. THILLE	Past President	
CHARLES COVARRUBIAS	MARSHALL MILLIGAN	
ELEANOR CROUCH	JERI DOUD MORRIS	
NAN DRAKE	TIM O'NEIL	
MAGGIE ERICKSON	WILLIAM L. ORCUTT	
RUTH FOLEY	LAURA PECK	
CYNTHIA LEFFLER	GEORGE SMITH	
CYNTHIA LLOYD-BUTLER	PENNY SPIZALE	
AMY MC AVOY	DORILL B. WRIGHT	
HADDY WHICALTED		

HARRY WUGALTER

KATHERINE H. HALEY	Financial Counsel
EDWARD W. ROBINGS	Executive Director

The *Quarterly* is published by the Ventura County Museum of History & Art at 100 East Main Street, Ventura, California 93001. The Museum assumes no responsibility for statements or opinions expressed by the authors of the articles.

Interested parties may become members of the Ventura County Museum of History & Art by donating to the Annual Fund at a level of \$35 or more; businesses, \$150. For further details regarding benefits, please contact the museum at 653-0323.

The *Quarterly* is produced under the direction of the Quarterly staff:
Theda Barnett
Yetive Hendricks
David Hill
Patricia A. Clark, Editor

THE

VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY

CONTENTS

PORTRAIT OF A SHERIFF	page 3
by Patricia A. Clark	

Cover illustration, courtesy of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department.

Photographs from the collection of the Ventura County Museum of History & Art.

This issue of the quarterly is the sequel to my first effort

THE SHERIFFS OF VENTURA COUNTY Volume 30, Number 4 Summer 1985

and is lovingly dedicated to

WILLIAM PETTIT CLARK

"Uncle Bill"

Examplar of Those Basic American Values

Treasured by His Boyhood Hero

Sheriff E. G. McMartin

As Chief of Police of the City of Oxnard

He Dealt the Fatal Blow to

Sheriff Mac's

Bete Noire

CHINA ALLEY

PORTRAIT OF A SHERIFF

by Patricia A. Clark

Brave and gentle,...gruff yet tender,...fearless yet never boastful,...
with the soul of a genius...the heart of a child,...
and as true as Damascus steel

- Edmund Guy McMartin -

the last Ventura County Sheriff to be elected on a partisan ballot and the only Ventura County Sheriff to be killed in the line of duty.

It was Sheriff McMartin's death, August 21, 1921, that evoked the above encomium from Ventura *Free Press* Editor D. J. Reese. He was not alone in his grief for the sheriff who had served Ventura County so well for just under twenty years. The Superior Court adjourned, the Board of Supervisors recessed and a group of Ventura attorneys drafted a resolution of condolence for the widow and children which was entered in the minutes of the Superior Court of the State of California in and for the County of Ventura. And hundreds of ordinary citizens turned out to mourn their beloved "Sheriff Mac" —

shot down in the discharge of his duty by a fiend incarnate, murdered by a being who was a sneaking, hideous travesty of a human being....Never was there a larger funeral in the county. Never was there a larger throng gathered to atest [sic] their love for a departed friend.²

Born June 28, 1860, in Jerusalem, Province of Quebec, McMartin had come to Mendocino County, California with his family in 1866. There he spent his childhood, worked as a woodsman, met and married Carrie Patton. When he was twenty-five years of age, the dark-haired, serious young man found his way to Ventura County, settling in the farming community of Springville.

For the next seventeen years, he enjoyed life with Carrie and their four children as well as the comparative anonymity of the farmer's life. Then, in 1902, he was nominated by Fergus L. Fairbanks of

Hueneme to run on the Republican ticket for the office of Sheriff of Ventura County.

The political atmosphere in Ventura County, indeed in the whole of the United States, was anything but serene in the fall of 1902. President McKinley had been assassinated just one year before—twice shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz. The optimism of the late 1800s was giving way to uncertainty as what had been judged good was no longer found to be so.

Agrarian political revolt was well on its way. The specter of change was further enhanced by the rhetoric of labor leaders and the rumblings of the anti-trust movement. The giants were falling — the era of the little man was dawning — nowhere more so than in Ventura County.

Fergus Fairbanks was to marvel in later years at his temerity in nominating the virtually unknown McMartin to oppose party favorite William Leachman Lewis. Not only was Lewis the only candidate out of four to be nominated to "great applause," he was the candidate nominated by F. W. Baker, Chairman of the county Republican Central Committee. (Baker momentarily resigned his gavel to place Lewis in the running.)³

Eight ballots later, "very close on Sunday morning," Lewis was finally defeated — by the other Republican nominees who combined forces to select "the new man in politics" as their candidate of choice.

Although the battle for sheriff's seat occupied center stage of the 1902 elections in Ventura County, the big coup was to be the unseating of Superior Court Judge Benjamin Tully Williams, the Big Boss of the Republican party — reputed to have for years determined "who should and who should not be nominated at the County Conventions." A second complaint was that too many decisions in the Williams court were going to Williams favorites, Selby and Barnes. This was a battle fought in the proverbial smoke-filled rooms — there was no one brave enough to openly oppose the powerful judge. The little men in the Republican party joined forces with the Democrats to select a middle-of-the-road candidate to run on the Democratic ticket. If the judge were aware of the collusion, he gave no indication that he was in the least worried, continuing "sanguine" into the face of the election.

The suspense by election time was well nigh intolerable: unknown E. G. McMartin (R) "of unimpeachable integrity, sterling character, strong and absolutely fearless...the only candidate on the Republican ticket south of the Santa Clara River" opposing eight-year incumbent Paul Charlebois (D) in what was basically Republican territory; Felix W. Ewing (D), secretly backed by an unknown number of Republicans as well as the Democratic party, opposing the apparently firmly entrenched Superior Court Judge B. T. Williams (R) in what was, as was stated before, basically Republican territory. "The election," as the Ventura *Free Press* observed, "promised from the start to be peculiar."

A further observation of the *Free Press* was that the final count of the election returns four years earlier had been delayed for some eight days causing the populace undue stress and anxiety. Precincts causing the problem were Cuyama ("impassable condition of the mountain trails") — and Piru ("the voting is done at Cuddy's place...miles and miles from nowhere"). The total count of the two precincts: thirty votes — which counted a great deal in an election which saw Paul Charlebois defeat prominent lima bean grower W. L. Lewis (the same man opposing McMartin in the 1902 primaries) for the position of sheriff by a mere three votes.⁵

For the election of 1902, the enterprising *Free Press* devised and executed a show-stopping solution — the votes from "far shut-in Cuyama and Piru" were brought in by Ed Mercer's carrier pigeons — and the results were tallied the morning after election day with spectacular results: Felix W. Ewing upset the Honorable Benjamin Tully Williams with a margin of 637 votes, defeating the Big Boss of the Republican party 2,005 to 1,368. Unknown E. G. McMartin claimed victory over incumbent Charlebois by 605 votes, the final tally being 2,017 to 1,412.

No man, not even the most enthusiastic opponent, thought for a moment that the defeat would be such an overwhelming landslide. The figures as they came in were simply stunning. 6

The county had good reason to be pleased with its choice for sheriff. Not only did Ed McMartin look the part — just under six feet tall, flowing handle-bar moustache, hazel eyes with more than a glint of steel — he acted the part as well.

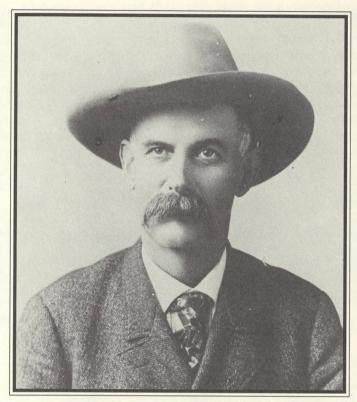
Shortly after he was sworn into office, McMartin had the first of the many narrow escapes that were to punctuate his career. In June of 1903, the Southern Pacific, travelling at what was later judged to be an excessive rate of speed, lost the hind truck of the day coach, the diner and the parlor car into the surf on the Ventura side of the Rincon. It was known that "Mrs. Tom Newby and the Donlons were aboard, and the friends of the parties were wild with suspense." Immediately on receiving the news, Sheriff McMartin, Tom Newby, George Dennis, S.P. Foreman Gleason and "his gang of Japanese" were rushing through the dense fog in a handcar to the scene of the derailment.

Unknown to the anxious rescue squad, the remnants of the disabled train — the engine, the smoker, and a baggage car — were limping toward Ventura loaded with bruised and badly shaken passengers. A second disaster was narrowly averted for the headlight was not seen until the engine was almost upon the rescuers. The train was successfully flagged down, however, and the doubly relieved Venturans returned to town upon it.⁷

At the start of his career, farmer-turned-sheriff McMartin had no deputies paid by the county. It was he who intercepted Frank Coffey, thief, bound for parts unknown in the "ill-gotten rig" (horse and buggy) of D. H. Strawn of Goleta.⁸

By his fifth term, he had three county-paid deputies; it was they who intercepted the Hupmobile, blinds and curtains drawn, manned by "two Italians," racing down the Rincon toward Los Angeles. In the car were two ill-gotten under-age Santa Barbara girls. The girls had been promised "good times, swell clothes, an apartment fitted to suit a queen," etc. The girls were returned to their parents; the Italians, turned over to Santa Barbara authorities; and a quantity of "booze" confiscated and stored in the sheriff's office where it blew up later in the week.9

Yes, the automobile arrived in Ventura County during the McMartin era and with it came new problems and new solutions. Soon the *Free Press* was fulminating against "speed maniacs" racing through Ventura attempting to break the record for the Los Angeles to San Francisco run. McMartin and his deputies declined to grant permission for the "Angelenos" to break the speed limits of the



VENTURA COUNTY SHERIFF E. G. McMARTIN

County of Ventura and, with the assistance of a new six-cylinder, seven-passenger Stevens-Duryea touring car, escorted the culprits quietly from county line to county line. ¹⁰

The first fatal accident in the county could not be attributed to speeding Angelenos, however; it was the first of many fatal encounters between the horseless carriage and its predecessor. In November of 1910, the "machine" of Frank Wadleigh failed to negotiate a curve on the Conejo grade. Passenger Milan Thompson was killed instantly.

When they were rounding the second curve on the grade they met Anton Baptiste in a single rig and started to take the outer side of the road in order to allow him to get by....The front wheel slipped over the brink and in an instant the big



SHERIFF'S CONVENTION, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, 1903 Sheriff E. G. McMartin, 5th from left, second row. Mrs. "Gertie" McMartin, 6th from left, back row.

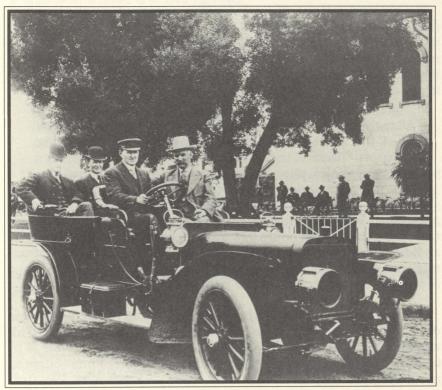
Pope-Hartford and its occupants were tumbling over and over down the precipice.11

As the joint-use Stevens-Duryea was not always immediately available, McMartin often was faced with the option of attempting to pursue automobiles with his personal buggy and "yellow-tailed horse" after swinging by Mercer's Garage to determine if the auto and chauffeur Ed Mercer were available. He was therefore not averse to advising folks to take the law into their own hands when the occasion demanded. For example, residents were advised to "load their shot guns with birdshot and take a pop at the first person caught trespassing in the night time....There is a place for all honest people at night and that is either home or in the middle of the road. One application of birdshot will put a stop to any trouble." ¹²

McMartin, it is obvious, had considerably less patience with crime and criminals than did his predecessors — to the delight of the *Free Press's* crusading editor and the increasingly sedate citizens of the

county. Slot machines and their operators were dispatched with vigor in spite of the *laissez faire* attitude of District Attorney Selby. Accused of playing "peek-a-boo with the citizens' committee, with the Sheriff, with the machine owners and the general public," Selby was awaiting evidence "to prove the slot machine a gambling device." Sheriff McMartin, however, "took the bull by the horns," arrested Mssrs. Summers, Arellanes, and Julian Cerf, confiscating their slot machines, cigar machines and roulette wheels — an "interesting collection," observed Editor Reese, contributing to a "novel appearing sheriff's office." ¹³

A particularly effective innovation was the "McMartin Rock Pile," in which "Knights of the Road" and other county luminaries such as



THE FIRST COUNTY-OWNED AUTOMOBILE Stevens-Duryea Six-Cylinder Touring Car Rear Seat, l-r: R. N. Haydon, T. W. McGlinchey Front Seat, l-r: Chauffeur Ed Mercer, "Sheriff Mac"

"King of the Redlights," M. Foley, discovered the value of honest labor.

M. Foley, who has posed about Oxnard corners for some time as a gentleman of elegant leisure, while the ladies who furnished him the money did all the work, started in at a new job this morning. He is one of Deputy Sheriff Viles' chief assistants on the rock pile. At the suggestion of the Sheriff and aided by Justice of the Peace Harris, Mr. Foley was induced to accept the position. He will be regularly retained as a member of the Sheriff's party for five months, and while this salary will not be great, he will regularly get three meals a day at the Hotel Salcido. 14

The enterprising sheriff erected a strong stockade on the beach at the foot of Figueroa Street. The enclosure, 100×150 feet in dimension and surmounted by barbed wire, was filled with "hobo prisoners" with the assignment of gathering, crushing and hauling beach rock. Guards were instructed to "shoot to hit" those attempting to escape over the wall.

After the first day there was mutiny, but the prisoners were given the choice of breaking rock or doing time in the dungeon. Three of them took the latter alternative and ten went to the rock pile. Today there were twelve at work. ¹⁵

Another "strike" in 1904 compelled the editor of the Free Press to complain "They are getting two squares a day and do not have to work more than eight or ten hours but still they are displeased." However, as Editor Reese concluded, "Bread and water and solitary confinement are good strike breakers and Friday at noon the word was sent to the sheriff that the men were ready to go back to work." ¹⁶

In a premature burst of enthusiasm for their hero, the *Free Press* declared in 1907, "the whole county...is remarkably free of all vagrants....It does not take long for the news that a rock pile is in operation to spread and the hobo hordes take a circuitous course to avoid the work." By December of the same year, however, forty-two vagrants were hard at work breaking rocks, hoeing weeds, improving the beaches, etc. ¹⁷

In 1915, the sheriff inaugurated his wheelbarrow brigade. Appear-

ing before the Board of Supervisors, Sheriff Mac stated that there were no less than 300 idle men within the boundaries of the city and close to 200 camping in the Ventura River bottoms. "People are feeding them at their backdoors and the drain is becoming severe on the householders who live in convenient places for the men out-of-work to visit." Those merely out-of-work were to be paid directly; monies earned by inmates of the county jail would be "handed over to their families."¹⁸

Housewives were told, "Don't feed the hobo — send him to the Sheriff's office, where he will not only get something to eat, but will also get a chance to earn what he eats." The ladies evidently complied with the sheriff's requests but later satisfied their humanitarian instincts in a more effective fashion.

Sheriff McMartin's husky hoboes have expressed a strong liking for the tent city and the beach this good old summertime....The ladies of the Club House Association...have furnished them with dainty cakes and pizen things...as well as choice cuts of barbecued meat with chili sauce....They are anxiously looking forward now to pink tea, fruit punch and ices, rounded out, perhaps, with a round of flinch or progressive euchre. ¹⁹

The county was appreciative when McMartin captured and brought about the conviction of Ojai bank robber George Downing. It was astounded when he traced Oxnard embezzler C. Curtis Hill to an obscure island in the Philippines, "causing his subsequent arrest there and conviction here" in Ventura County. ²⁰

Murderers were brought to justice with the same dogged persistence:

Louis Fortune, the murderer of the Furrer family at Hueneme,..Ellis, the murderer of Carl Stannard at Oxnard..,Fred Miller, the negro murderer of the little Rodriguez girl at Simi....all paid the penalty for their crime.²¹

His most notable capture, however, was that of Manuel Fabella and Dolores Quintana, the two who lured Oxnard Deputy Constable Andrew McNaughton to his death on March 17, 1906.

China Alley, the tenderloin district of Oxnard, had long given cause for concern amongst law enforcement agencies in the area. The concern was justifiable, albeit intensified by the racial prejudice prevalent at the time.

There has been for some time a growing sentiment against the large foreign element of this district owing to the fact that whenever crime has been committed there it has been impossible to secure evidence pointing to the guilty one unless an officer of the law or a white man actually saw the crime committed.²²

McNaughton was one officer of the law unwilling to let matters be in Oxnard's red light district. Long known as "a terror to evildoers," he had incurred the wrath of the residents and habituées of China Alley by raiding a gambling den and running in the gamblers, causing all to be heavily fined. This recent extraordinary heroism, plus the fact that this father of four had been shot in the back, called for immediate action, in the opinion of the Ventura *Free Press*.

McMartin agreed. He first "closed every dive in the red light district,..ordered all inmates to leave town for twenty-four hours, confiscated half-a-dozen opium layouts and took six or seven well-known disreputable characters" into custody. Then began the hard work: the careful sifting of information, evaluation of evidence and tracking of leads. It was to pay off with the arrest, trial and consignment to the "criminal insane ward" for Manuel Fabella—and, three years later, with the arrest and trial of Dolores Quintana who had fled to Mexico. "So close was the Sheriff's watch, that the moment he stepped over the line he was arrested." His trial lasted four days.

Fabella is now [at the time of McMartin's death] serving a life term in Folsom Prison and Quintana died in the criminal insane ward. 23

Upon hearing of the shooting death of Oxnard Constable Warren Willard, McMartin, in Los Angeles on official business, hired an automobile and hastened up the road toward Ventura. It was known that the shooting had occurred 300 yards east of the Oxnard Depot when Willard attempted to arrest three hoboes building a fire with confiscated railroad ties. Spotting "two suspicious hoboes" in Cala-



SHERIFF E. G. McMARTIN & DEPUTY PABLO AYALA, 1915

basas, McMartin pulled over to question them, was attacked and knocked unconscious. He reached Oxnard in a dazed condition, but assisted in the search until he collapsed. It was found he had two broken ribs and a fractured skull. Observed the *Free Press*: "The men undoubtedly took unfair advantage of the sheriff,...for no man has ever been known to get the best of...Sheriff Mac." ²⁴

Raids on the west end of Ventura as well as China Alley were routine throughout the early years of McMartin's term of office. Gamblers, thugs, macs, soiled doves, leches, etc. would be arrested on charges of disturbing the peace (which they did), drunkenness (which they suffered from more than the ordinary citizen) and vagrancy (no obvious means of support) until December of 1914 when Governor Hiram Johnson's Red Light Abatement Bill became law and prostitution became illegal in the State of California. Until that time, however, the sheriff did as well as he could to keep the denizens of the county underworld from "flaunting their vileness on the principal thoroughfares." From the pages of the Ventura *Free Press*:

June 26, 1903: "Thirteen worthless, degraded specimens of human beings were in the drag net, white men, Mexicans, Japs, as despi-

cable a collection as man ever looked upon,...the notorious gang, who have been gaining their living off the fallen women who infest the sugar town and who long have been a festering sore to the better citizens of that town."

March 25, 1904: "Sheriff McMartin Monday served notice upon the gilded dames who have been frequenting the saloons that a repetition of the offense would cause an arrest for vagrancy."

December 22, 1905: "Saturday the sheriff and his officers rounded up the dissolute characters, macs and opium fiends, who make their living off the disreputable women of the west end."

March 23, 1906: "Oxnard has served notice on its blacklegs, its gamblers, its macs and its denizens of the red light district to leave the city within twenty-four hours. Ventura needs to be vigilant just now. Some of these moral monsters are headed this way."

January 24, 1908: "We are informed on reliable authority,...that the soiled doves have come back to town, and that the haunts on West Main are again tenanted....The moment that the authoritative back is turned it has to make the fight all over again."

October 16, 1908: "Sheriff McMartin and District Attorney Bowker, together with three Oxnard trustees, took a run through the Chinese quarter and the redlight district of the sugar town last night, with the result that forty of fifty women who have occupied the cribs in that malodorous block will have to vacate and get out of the town of Oxnard....There is wailing in the lower stratas of Oxnard's society because of the clean-up."

July 28, 1911: "The town is overrun with women and their hangerson. Over sixty women will be given notice to leave. Permits for conducting messenger service will be cancelled. The demand is general that all tin horns and women be run out of town. They have been flocking here, as they expected to find rich pickings from the 800 employees of the sugar factory, which has begun its annual run."

June 14, 1912: "Sheriff McMartin has started in on his clean-up of the Oxnard purlieus and made a raid there the other day, getting into the net a Chinese and a Mexican woman consort."

Sheriff Mac's efforts were not always appreciated by the locals, particularly in Oxnard. As reported in Oxnard's *Review*:

One thing is clear, Sheriff McMartin intends to do things in Oxnard according to the dictates of his own conscience and the dictum of the late grand jury, no matter how many deputies are lost in the scramble, or how severe the slap administered to the peace officers of the municipality or its governing body. If murderers could be run to earth as easily as prostitutes, the state would need more penitentiaries, and crime might be lessened materially." ²⁵

To the majority of the citizenry, however, Sheriff Mac was a hero of the highest caliber. Each succeeding election found his lead increasing substantially. In 1906, he defeated Tom Clark by 794 votes; William E. Kelly was defeated by McMartin 2,227 to 1,767 in 1910, a whopping 4,940 to 13 in 1914. There was no contest in 1918 as the election was settled in the primaries with Republican McMartin's substantial lead over opposition T. William McGlinchey, Democrat.

Admirers proliferated, often in unexpected quarters. In 1921, the California School for Girls on the Avenue erupted in a riot. Some of the girls broke windows and furniture; some burned bedding; some escaped. Again, it was Sheriff McMartin who came to the rescue:

Of all the officers there, the rioting girls were ready to yield first of all to the sheriff. 26

Bill Clark remembers vividly the morning he met the sheriff — Clark, on his horse, headed for Mill School; Sheriff McMartin, on his horse, tracking two horse thieves in the Ventura riverbed. McMartin "questioned" Clark for some fifteen minutes, but those fifteen minutes were enough to make Clark the center of attention for the rest of the school year.

Edmund G. McMartin's life reads like a western movie script of the James Stewart variety: unsophisticated in its reinforcing of basic American values; reassuring in its assumption that good will triumph and evil be punished. His death fades to a grade "B" tragedy, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."



OXNARD CONSTABLE W. E. KELLY

There are questions that can never be asked and answers that will never be found. For example, why did two officers with the experience, good sense and capability of Sheriff McMartin and Constable Kelly approach the quarters of known killers and, with guns in holsters, knock on the front door? The August 14 killing of nineteen-year-old Justo Garcia, a field hand employed by the American Beet Sugar factory in Oxnard, had been particularly brutal. He had been held up, searched, then shot, hands still in the air, when it was found he had no money. His brother witnessed the shooting. The killers knew he

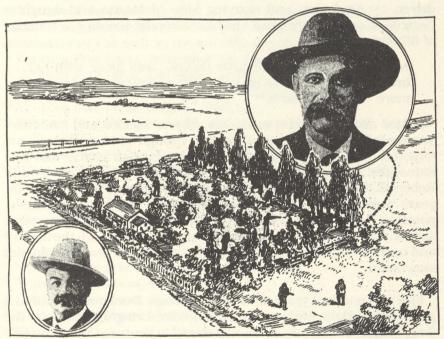
had done so, yet made no attempt to block his escape. Did they think he would be too frightened to inform on the "bad men of the valley," as Pedro Ramirez and José Duran were known amongst the Mexican community of Oxnard?

It was 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning, September 21, 1921, when Sheriff McMartin got a call telling him of the whereabouts of Ramirez and Duran, presumed murderers of Justo Garcia. The informant, Tony Rose, and the brother of the victim accompanied McMartin and Constable Kelly of Oxnard to Owensmouth (Canoga Park area). Mrs. Vellardi (or Valarde), landlady of the two hunted men, pointed out their one-room shack on the back of her property, stating that she did not think the two were at home.

The officers went up to the front door, found it locked, then demanded that the occupant open in the name of the law—still with pistols in holster. Did Ramirez immediately fire through the door or did he throw the door open at McMartin's knock and then fire his Colt forty-five? The accounts differ. It is agreed that Ramirez knew who they were and why they were there. It is agreed, also, that neither officer had drawn a gun.

McMartin was shot four times just below the heart; he died instantly. Constable Kelly, shot twice in the abdomen, died three hours later on the operating table at Los Angeles Receiving Hospital.

The terrified Ramirez, after emptying his gun at the officers, leapt over their bodies and ran for the sheriff's car, Tony Rose scrambling out the opposite side. Ramirez then abandoned the car he couldn't figure how to start and ran down the road with Owensmouth Constable Tom Murray, armed with a 30-30, in hot pursuit. Murray's first shot got Ramirez in the shoulder; the second shattered his left knee. Shortly after, armed citizens of Owensmouth and the Los Angeles posse arrived, surrounding the windbreak sheltering the fugitive. Ramirez fired five shots at his pursuers. The sixth he put into his own heart.



MAN HUNT REACHES CLIMAX IN GUN FIGHT IN PEACH ORCHARD

Brought to bay in cover of trees near Owensmouth, Mexican identified as Pedro Ramirez, slayer of the two officers, sent bullet into his own heart and was found dead after storm of shots had swept his hiding place.

(Los Angeles Times, August 21, 1921)

Ventura's response on hearing the news of McMartin's death was swift but not particularly successful. Of the three automobiles dispatched to Owensmouth, only one made it without mishap.

Undersheriff Allen Pope with a posse, Motor Cop Sullivan with another crew, all heavily armed...burned out bearings enroute and all were delayed about an hour reaching the scene.²⁷

Los Angeles County Sheriff Traeger, heading for Owensmouth from Los Angeles at top speed, had a similar experience. He managed to beat the Ventura posse to the scene, however, by commandeering a "big car" also "speeding toward Owensmouth."²⁸

Unfortunately, the car that did arrive first was the county Cadillac driven by Art Lovatt and carrying Mrs. McMartin and daughter Gertrude Cook. Arriving just one hour after the shooting, a distance of fifty-four miles,

Mrs. McMartin with the little family,...was alone with her brave husband,...forced to keep a silent vigil over the body for more than two hours.²⁹

As for Joe Duran, he made his way to Mexico and hid there successfully for a number of years. Though hidden, he was not forgotten. Los Angeles officers on one occasion nearly had him kidnapped and brought across the border. Ventura County Sheriff Robert E. Clark, a man cut from the same cloth as McMartin, for years watched and waited, making trips to the border whenever possible. Once, he came within an "ace" of getting Duran to come across. Later, he hired an ex-convict to make friends with the fugitive and to trick him into falling into the hands of the law. He was not successful.³⁰

Five and one-half years after the shootings, Duran was killed in a gambling dispute, still south of the border, bringing to a close the final chapter in the story of the only sheriff in Ventura County history to be killed in the line of duty. It is, perhaps, not inappropriate to conclude with the final lines of Ventura *Free Press* Editor Reese's eulogy, begun on page one of this narrative:

Good-bye, dear old Mac.
Peace be with you kind heart,
good fellow, true friend.

NOTES

- ¹ Ventura Free Press, August 26, 1921.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ventura *Free Press*, August 22, 1902; Fergus Fairbanks, "Reminiscences of Early Political Campaigns," *Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. VII, No. 1, November, 1961.
- ⁴ Ventura Free Press, October 31, 1902; November 7, 1902.
- ⁵ Ventura Free Press, November 6, 1902.
- 6 Ibid.
- ⁷ Ventura Free Press, June 5, 1903
- ⁸ Ventura Free Press, August 17, 1906.
- 9 Ventura Free Press, February 25, 1921
- ¹⁰ Ventura *Free Press*, October 18, 1907; May 21, 1909; May 28, 1909. (The automobile was shared by the county supervisors, road commissioners as well as the sheriff's department.)
- ¹¹ Ventura Free Press, November 11, 1910.
- ¹² Ventura Free Press, December 1, 1911.
- ¹³ Ventura Free Press, October 3, 1903; March 25, 1904.
- ¹⁴ Ventura Free Press, July 17, 1903.
- ¹⁵ Ventura *Free Press*, April 24, 1903; September 4, 1903; September 25, 1903.
- ¹⁶ Ventura Free Press, March 25, 1904.
- ¹⁷ Ventura Free Press, February 1, 1907; December 20, 1907.
- 18 Ventura Free Press, January 15, 1915; January 22, 1915.
- ¹⁹ Ventura Free Press, January 22, 1915; August 15 1915.
- ²⁰ Ventura Free Press, August 26, 1921.
- 21 Ibid.
- ²² Ventura Free Press, March 23, 1906.
- ²³ Ventura Free Press, August 26, 1921.
- ²⁴ Ventura Free Press, March 29, 1912
- ²⁵ Ventura Free Press, June 14, 1912.
- ²⁶ Ventura *Free Press*, March 4, 1921; March 31, 1921; August 26, 1921.
- ²⁷ Ventura Free Press, August 26, 1921.
- ²⁸ Los Angeles Times, August 21, 1921.
- ²⁹ Ventura Free Press, August 26, 1921.
- ³⁰ "Last of the Old Lawmen," Fortnight: California's Own Magazine, Vol. 16, No. 10, May 19, 1954.

Los Compadres del Museo

Anonymous Donor Bank of A. Levy Mrs. Reginald Baptiste Burson Ranch Company Dr. & Mrs. Ralph Busch Chevron, U.S.A. Deloitte Haskins & Sells Mrs. Pauline S. Fourt Grupe Development Company Katherine H. Halev Mr. & Mrs. Ron Hertel Hewlitt-Packard Mr. & Mrs. Walter W. Hoffman Hernan Ibanez The James Irvine Foundation Mr. & Mrs. D. Gordon King Congressman & Mrs. Robert Lagomarsino Robert B. Lamb James & Cynthia Lloyd-Butler Lavon & Fay Borchard Mahan Mrs. Helen Mayr Mr. & Mrs. John R. McConica II Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Milligan Margaret E. Murphy Mrs. John L. Orcutt **Edward Robings** Rockwell International Zella A. Rushing Charles & Mary Leavens Schwabauer Shell Oil Company Foundation Barbara Barnard Smith Smith-Hobson Foundation Texaco, U.S.A. Dorcas H. Thille Mrs. Robert D. Willis Mr. & Mrs. Larry Wolfe Miss Cynthia Wood

Los Compadres del Messeo

LIFE MEMBERS OF THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

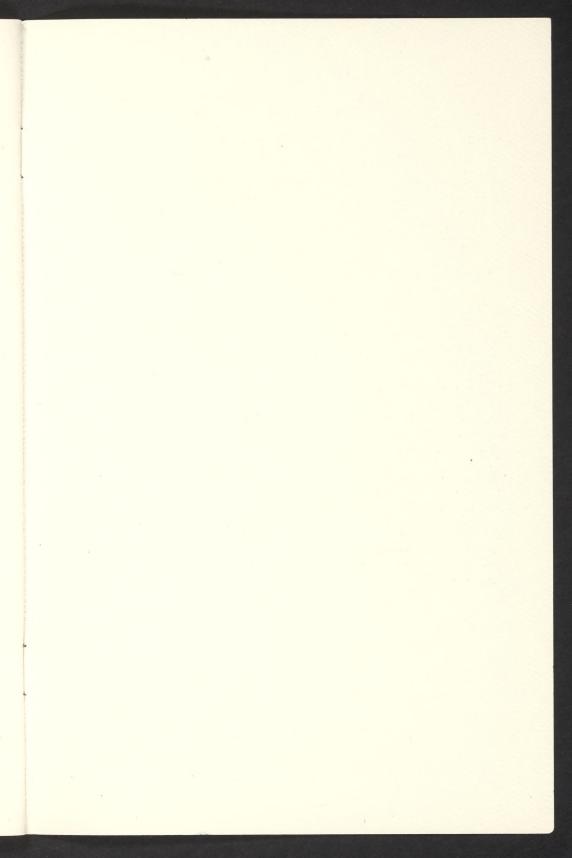
Mrs. Stewart M. Angus Avenue Hardware Bank of A. Levy Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Bank Mrs. Philip Bard Mr. & Mrs. R. V. Barker Michael & Joan Barnard Mr. & Mrs. Ray G. Barnard Mavis Barnhill Mr. & Mrs. Ralph "Hoot" Bennett Mr. James H. Boatner Mr. & Mrs. John W. Borchard Mr. & Mrs. Milton C. Borchard James L. & Martha J. Brock Mr. & Mrs. Cullins Brown Mr. & Mrs. Douglas W. Burhoe, Jr. Mrs. Reginald Burnham Edwin L. Carty Mr. & Mrs. James E. Clark II Mary A. Cohen Mary Ann Cohen Mr. & Mrs. Lincoln E. Cryne Marla Daily M. F. Daily Investment Co. Mrs. W. Thomas Davis Del Norte Foods, Inc. Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Diedrich Mr. & Mrs. Milton Diedrich Mrs. Margaret P. Donlon Nazarene E. Donlon Mr. & Mrs. Donald D. Dufau Jane E. Duncan Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Eastwood Economy Plumbing, Inc. Wilhelm S. & Geneva Everett Faria Family Partnership Mrs. Pauline S. Fourt Dr. William J. Fox Marjorie A. Fraser

Mr. & Mrs. John B. Friedrich Anne Lefever Fugate R. W. Fulkerson Hardware Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Garrett Herbert C. Gould Mrs. Lee M. Griswold Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Grosfield Katherine H. Haley Mr. & Mrs. Richard S. Hambleton. Jr. Ruth N. Hammond Mr. & Mrs. Walter Haneberg Mr. & Mrs. E. J. Harrison Mrs. Sanger C. Hedrick John F. Henning Mr. & Mrs. Walter W. Hoffman Mrs. C. Richard Hughes Isensee Floorcovering Co. Bill & Elise Kearney Richard & Ramona Lagomarsino Zoella Marriott Lakin David Adolfo Lamb John Burket Lamb Katherine Ann Lamb Maureen Isabel Lamb Robert B. Lamb Robert B. Lamb III Robert B. Lamb IV Stephen William Lamb Susana Elizabeth Lamb Robert D. Lefever Mrs. Robert M. Lefever Susan Nicole Lefever Edie LeFevre Jim F. Lincoln, M.D. Sheridan A. Logan Mr. & Mrs. John A. Maring Walter B. Marriott, Jr. Mr. & Mrs. Edwin J. Marshall II

Mr. & Mrs. Albert C. Martin Mr. & Mrs. Robert E. Martin Mr. & Mrs. William J. Mason Mrs. Edward Maulhardt Mrs. Ted Mayr The McAvoy Family Trust Lucia Ramsaur McCormick Mrs. Eulialee McMullen Katherine Smith Miller Mr. & Mrs. Martin R. Miller Mr. & Mrs. Owens Miller Capt. & Mrs. Robert N. Miller III Mr. & Mrs. A. A. Milligan Harold D. Munroe Margaret Murphy Mary E. C. Murphy Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Naumann Mr. & Mrs. John V. Newman Lindsay F. Nielson Mrs. Ben E. Nordman Linda & Romualdo Ochoa The Douglas Penfield School Margaret Reimer Petit Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Petit Renee Canet Pezzi Carolyn Pidduck Mrs. Dorothy Ranger Mr. & Mrs. Leon Reiman The Honorable & Mrs. William A. Reppy Mrs. Jean Roff Mrs. F. H. Rosenmund Mrs. Janet W. Rothschild Mrs. Henry J. Rulfo

Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Russell III

Sattler's Furniture & Upholstery Mrs. Walter Scholtz Schulze News Co., Inc. Mrs. Reginald Shand Mrs. Lester T. Shiells Mrs. Fred A. Shore Barbara B. Smith Dr. Helen M. Smith Mr. & Mrs. Ralph E. Smith 2-R Smith Investment Co. Dr. C. A. Smolt Harold B. Spencler Jeanne Maulhardt Sweeney Mrs. Milton M. Teague Mr. & Mrs. Joe A. Terry Texaco, U.S.A. John E. & Verna H. Thompson **TOLD** Corporation Mr. & Mrs. Ord Toomey Union Oil Company of California Harry Valentine Melba N. Vanoni Ventura County Star-Free Press Ventura Knights of Columbus Viola, Inc. Weiss Global Enterprises B. M. & Julia Wilkerson Mr. & Mrs. Richard D. Willett Mr. & Mrs. Robert D. Willis Mrs.& Mrs. John R. Wilson Mr. & Mrs. Phelps Witter, Jr. Cynthia Wood Dr. & Mrs. Bruce A. Woodling Mr. & Mrs. Dorill B. Wright



This issue of

THE VENTURA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

is made possible by a grant from

The K. Leonard and Ienne T. Stump Library Fund